



**A few words
from State
Superintendent
of Schools
Lillian M.
Lowery**

Education in Maryland is truly a team effort. Students, teachers, administrators, and parents come together to make our schools the best they can be. Too often we forget about the important contributions that parents make.

The sixth annual Parent Involvement Matters Awards (PIMA) program, held last week, provided a vivid reminder of the power that parents and guardians play. I left that evening awestruck by the volunteer work taking place throughout our State. Annette DiMaggio from Queen Anne's County may have won the award, but all 24 finalists were outstanding.

The real winners? Our students and our schools. Whether it was helping provide economically disadvantaged students with meals on weekends, developing new educational programs, or improving student health and wellness, our parent honorees are inspirational.

For more on Annette DiMaggio and all the winners, click [here](#).

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Devan Ogbum

Also inspirational are our student leaders. The State Board this week heard from Devan Ogbum, the 2012-13 president of the Maryland Association of Student Councils (MASC), and her energy is infectious.

Devan is a student at Leonardtown High School in St. Mary's County. Along with her MASC colleagues, she provides a strong student voice in the educational policy debates. Here's some more good news: Devan will be back again next school year for a second term at the helm of MASC.

STATE BOARD APPROVES NEW CONCUSSION SAFETY MEASURES

The Maryland State Board of Education this week approved new regulations designed to further improve safety for student-athletes. The regulations make permanent emergency rules put in place last summer aimed at strengthening concussion safety, while including some important new protections.

The regulations, approved unanimously by the State Board, include the following new requirements:

- Coaches must complete biennial refresher concussion training.
- Physical education teachers are required to complete concussion training.
- Local school systems must implement policies for student athletes who have sustained a suspected concussion to ensure appropriate academic accommodations; documented notification to parents; and timely notification to athletic directors and school nurses.
- School systems must identify health care providers authorized to return student-athletes to play after a suspected concussion has occurred.
- MSDE, in collaboration with an appropriate medical, academic, and athletic advisory team, to identify collision, contact, and non-contact sports; and recommend limitations of contact athletic exposures to reduce concussion risk.



"People are on board with this," Edward Sparks, executive director of the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association, said of the new regulations. "Given

For more on MASC, see the organization's website:
<http://www.mdstudentcouncils.com>.

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Also on the State Board's agenda was our annual visit with the 24 local Teachers of the Year for 2013-14. The teachers, the colleagues, and families packed the State Board room, and their visit was truly a highlight for Board members and staff alike.

Maryland has participated in the National Teacher of the Year Program for 24 years, and our nominees have had tremendous success in recent years. Kim Oliver Burnim of Montgomery County was National Teacher of the Year in 2006. Michelle Shearer of Frederick County was named National Teacher of the Year in 2011. The 2012-13 Maryland Teacher of the Year, Cecil County's Rhonda Blankenship, was one of four finalists this year.

Is there a national finalist among this year's Maryland teachers? We don't know for certain. But we do know that our teachers are as accomplished as any in the nation. It was a privilege to meet them, and I look forward to visiting them often throughout the year. They are a terrific group!

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Calendar

June 17 – 20 – Educator Effectiveness Academies,
 Wicomico and Prince George's Counties

June 24-27 – Educator Effectiveness Academies,
 Harford and Howard Counties

June 24 – Northrop Grumman STEM Scholars
 Banquet, Baltimore

June 25 – Maryland State Board of Education

MPSSAA Executive Director Edward Sparks and Alicia Mezu, MSDE specialist in school health services, discuss the concussion regulations with the State Board.

all the publicity, all the information that is out there, there has been no pushback. There might have been three or four years ago.”

Emergency regulations approved last July by the State Board required training for coaches in the area of brain injuries, and put in place a process for returning injured athletes to competition. At the same time, the Board directed the Maryland State Department of Education to convene a task force to study concussion-related issues including prevention strategies. The work of that task force led to the new regulations approved today.

Board members indicated their interest in continuing efforts to improve the safety of student-athletes. “This is a first step,” said board member James DeGraffenreidt. “I ask that you think for actively about a longer term plan.”

The regulations were published in the Maryland Register in March, with the comment period ending April 22. The regulations go into effect immediately.

QUEEN ANNE'S PARENT NAMED STATEWIDE PIMA WINNER

Annette DiMaggio of Queen Anne's County last week was named statewide winner of the sixth annual Maryland Parent Involvement Matters Awards program.



2013 PIMA winner Annette DiMaggio (center) is honored by Target's Matt Boylan and State Superintendent Lillian Lowery.

Ms. DiMaggio, an energetic volunteer and PTA president at Sudlersville Elementary, initiated a "Backpack Fridays" project to provide nourishment for at-risk students over the weekends when they are not offered the free meals at school. She collects funds from friends, community

members, school staff, and local businesses. Ms. DiMaggio also purchases the food as recommended by the FDA, stores it in her commercial kitchen, and

Meeting, Baltimore



VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS

2013 PIMA Awards

May 17, 2013

Annette DiMaggio of Queen Anne's County wins the 2013 Parent Involvement Matters Award. Highlights of the gala event, the semi-finalists, and the finalists, from Eastern Tech in Baltimore County.



VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS

Videos of the 5 PIMA Awards Finalists

May 17, 2013

Sixth Annual Maryland Parent Involvement Matters Awards Program

In the News

State Board Approves Concussion Regulations

Baltimore Sun

How Maryland Overhauled its Schools while Iowa Fell Back

Des Moines Register

Parent Honored for Role in Perry Hall Aftermath

Baltimore Sun

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personally fills bags every Thursday to feed 34 students. Other outreach efforts include Community Cares, movie night at the school, and management of the school store. Ms. DiMaggio, who exemplifies the meaning of parent involvement throughout the community, also serves as the PTA president at Sudlersville Middle School where her son attends. Her numerous outreach activities have increased parent involvement at both schools.

Ms. DiMaggio was selected from five finalists also announced at the award ceremony at Eastern Technical High School in Baltimore County. The finalists were narrowed down from a list of 24 semifinalists announced last month. In addition to Ms. DiMaggio, the finalists were:

- Carol Streeter—Crofton Elementary School, Anne Arundel County
- Jana Sheffer—Frederick High School, Frederick County
- Tami McClatchey—Waterloo Elementary School, Howard County
- Megan Cook—Easton Elementary School, Talbot County

“Annette DiMaggio saw a need at her school and in her community, and wouldn’t rest until the need was met. She is an outstanding representative for the thousands of parent and guardian volunteers at work in our schools,” said State Superintendent of Schools Lillian M. Lowery. “Strong parental involvement elevates the activity taking place in our classrooms.”

Governor Martin O’Malley said that parents have been key to improving the State’s schools.

“Maryland leads the nation in public education and our continued progress is due in large part to the tireless commitment of parents and guardians to their neighborhood schools,” he said. “Volunteers have helped improve student achievement, worked to strengthen school nutrition, and have partnered with us to improve school safety. Parent involvement is absolutely critical to building on our success and helping our children grow and compete in the future.”

Target Corporation (NYSE: TGT) served as Maryland’s Parent Involvement Matters Awards’ Platinum Sponsor of the event for the second straight year.

“At Target, we are committed to serving local communities where we do business,” said Laysha Ward, president, community relations, Target. “That’s why we are proud to partner with the

Maryland State Department of Education as we work to strengthen communities and enrich the lives of our guests and team members.”

In addition to the finalist and statewide winner announcements, Mary Kavanagh from Baltimore County was presented with the JoAnne L. Carter Memorial Award in recognition of her special work with Perry Hall High school. This award is given annually in honor of JoAnne L. Carter, Deputy State Superintendent for the Maryland State Department of Education, who lost her battle with cancer in 2009. A parent herself, Ms. Carter was a staunch advocate for parental involvement in education. The award, sponsored by her family, is given annually to a parent that exemplifies all that she held dear.

Ms. Kavanagh brought “Project Love” to Perry Hall in the wake of the cafeteria shooting that occurred at the start of the school year. Her goal was to replace the images of violence in the cafeteria with an image of love in the form of a special mural painting. The Project Love mural was created with the handprints of students and staff who were in the cafeteria at the time of the event - filling in the word “Love.” The shooting victim placed the final handprint on the mural.

The Parent Involvement Matters Awards is the nation’s first and only statewide award program of its kind. The Maryland State Department of Education’s program recognizes parents and guardians for their exceptional support of public education. Parents were nominated for demonstrating significant, positive impact in their communities across five areas of parental involvement: Communication, Volunteering, Learning, Decision Making and Community Collaboration.

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